

Police and Neighbors Join in a SoHo Search For Missing Schoolboy

A 6-year old boy who disappeared after leaving his home in the SoHo area of Manhattan for school Friday morning was the object of a door-to-door search yesterday afternoon by the police and neighborhood residents. The police also called in helicopters and bloodhounds for the search.

The boy, Etan Patz, was described by the police as 40 inches tall, with blond hair, blue eyes and weighing 50 pounds. He was last seen by his parents, Stanley and Julie Patz, at 8 A.M. Friday when he left his home at 113 Prince Street.

He normally boards a school bus two blocks west, at the corner of West Broadway and Prince, but the bus driver and other children on the bus told the police that the missing boy never got on the bus. However, late Friday afternoon the boy was in a neighborhood lumber store, according to the store's manager.

"We're doing a floor-by-floor, wall-by-wall, rooftop-by-rooftop, backyard-by-backyard search," said Deputy Inspector Dennis-Ryan, who was heading the investigation of 30 police officers and five detectives. He said there had been "several reports and leads" regarding the boy, but that each had proved fruitless.

The parents telephoned Etan's school, Public School 3, at 310 Greenwich Street, Friday afternoon when he did not return home. When school officials said he had

not attended school, the parents notified the police.

Howard Belasco, manager of the Gem Lumber Company at 175 Spring Street, said the missing boy had been in his store at "about 4:30 or 5 P.M." on Friday with another young boy.

"They were outside playing in a dumpster, pulling out scraps of lumber and then they came here and bought two boxes of nails," Mr. Belasco said. "Then they went around back and took some more scraps, then they disappeared."

Mr. Belasco said he had recognized the boy from a school picture distributed by the police.

As a police helicopter flew overhead to search roofs, two bloodhounds, brought in by state troopers, picked up the boy's scent from his bed clothes and traced it to the lumber store, about three blocks west

of the Patz home. The dogs entered the store several times, but had trouble picking up the scent again on the street.

Etan, a first-grader, was wearing a blue jacket, blue pants, blue and white sneakers and a black cap.

Police officers were stationed in and around the Patz home, a large cooperative loft on the third floor. Mr. Patz is a photographer, and he and his wife have a daughter about 4 years old. The police asked that anyone with information about Etan call the home at 777-3683.

Later, two men and a woman, who described themselves as "artists who live in the area and who have children," walked up to a police officer in front of the home and volunteered to help in the search.

"We'll just walk around and try to think like a 6-year-old," one of the men said.



Etan Patz



The New York Times/D. Gorton

Stanley and Julie Patz in their apartment yesterday. Behind them, police answered calls coming into a special number.

Boy Missing From SoHo Was on Own First Time

By PETER KIHSS

Last Friday was the first day that 6-year-old Etan Patz had ever been allowed to walk alone the two blocks from his home to a school bus. His mother said yesterday that she had yielded to the blond, blue-eyed youngster's pleas that he was grown up enough to go out alone.

Yesterday, 30 uniformed police officers and 10 detectives canvassed the SoHo area searching for him, rechecking buildings and questioning businessmen and delivery truckers back from the holiday weekend. The police had exceptional help from the community.

Julie Patz said she could see her son from her loft's third-floor fire escape at 113 Prince Street, near Greene, as he walked past Wooster Street to the bus stop at Prince and West Broadway.

The bus, manned by a new driver after the end of the bus strike, left at 8 A. M., 10 minutes early, with only six pupils aboard because the new driver did not realize he should have had 24 passengers, Mrs. Patz said.

Etan, a first-grader at the Independence Plaza annex of Public School 3, had left early at 7:55 with a dollar to buy a drink to go with his lunch, she said.

He never made the last half block either to stop in a store or to the corner where another mother waited for him until 8:20 after the bus had pulled out.

The last block was filled with trucks for a wholesale bakery and other businesses and all sorts of pedestrians walking past its six- and seven-story buildings.

Etan — a Hebrew name to which he answers as Ai-tan — was carrying his lunch in a small blue tote bag imprinted with cartooned red and white elephants. He also had a white cardboard roller containing erasers in dinosaur and racing-car shapes, a ruler and pencils. His black cap was labeled "Eastern Air Lines Junior Pilot."

"He thinks everyone of all ages is wonderful, trustworthy and kind and a desirable companion," his mother said.

Sgt. Robert Tompkins, commanding the First Precinct's detectives, said the police were inspecting roofs, elevator shafts, basements and backs of trucks. A police helicopter flew over SoHo roofs and harbor police checked piers.

Sergeant Tompkins said two state police bloodhounds separately indicated they had picked up Etan's scent last Saturday near a lumber yard at Spring and Thompson Streets where an employee said he was with a boy who had bought nails Friday. No such youngster has been found.

Thousands of circulars with Etan's pictures were affixed to lampposts and store windows, distributed by neighborhood children and adults and posted by transit police. The police appealed for information to be telephoned to a special number, 473-5967, or the First Precinct, 334-0611. A SoHo Weekly News reward for Etan's return was increased to \$1,000.

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Stanley Patz

Etan Patz, photographed by his father in September 1978.

Police Release a Sketch in Case of Missing Patz Boy

By ROBERT McG. THOMAS Jr.

The police have released an artist's sketch of a man who, detectives say, may have "vital information" about Etan Patz, who disappeared while on his way to catch a school bus in SoHo last May.

The sketch appeared to be the first major development in the search for the boy, who was 6 years old when he disappeared. It has been the widest and longest search for a missing child by the New York City police in decades.

The drawing, based on a description provided by a woman who saw the man talking to a boy the day of Etan's disappearance, was prepared in early September. But it was not released then, the police said, because detectives hoped to find the man without attracting publicity.

When those efforts failed, the sketch was cleared for release in hopes that someone might recognize the man and notify the missing persons squad at 374-6913. The police said that all information would be kept confidential.

A description accompanying the sketch said the man was white and about 40 years old. He was described as thin and blue-eyed with dyed blond hair and large freckles or "beauty marks." His height and weight were not estimated.

According to detectives, the woman who provided the description came for-



Police Department sketch of a man who was reportedly seen talking with Etan Patz shortly before the boy disappeared.

ward shortly after Etan's disappearance, saying that on the morning he disappeared she had seen an unusual-looking man talking to a little boy about three

blocks from the Prince Street intersection where Etan had last been reported.

Detectives said that the woman had been hypnotized to aid her recollection, but it could not be determined last night why the police had waited more than three months to prepare the sketch.

Since Etan disappeared on May 25, hundreds of detectives have combed the SoHo neighborhood, pictures of the boy have been sent to police departments across the country and a five-man task force has continued to investigate a case that has produced few clues.

First Time to Bus Stop Alone

Etan's parents observed his seventh birthday earlier this month. The last report that the police have about the boy put him about a half a block from his home at 113 Prince Street, as he was walking the two blocks to a school bus stop at Prince Street and West Broadway.

It was the first time he had been allowed to go to the bus stop alone, according to his mother, Julie, who said she had yielded to her son's pleas that he was grown up enough to go out alone.

The blond, blue-eyed youngster, who was 40 inches tall at the time, was wearing blue pants and sneakers, a blue jacket, and a black, Eastern Airlines pilot's

cap. He was carrying a blue cloth school bag with elephant imprints.

A postman and another person recalled seeing him at Prince and Wooster Streets, a short distance from his home, but a woman who waited at the bus stop told the police that Etan never got there.

Responding to pleas from Etan's mother and father, Stanley, scores of neighborhood volunteers joined the police in a door-to-door search of the area, but despite hundreds of calls from prospective witnesses, many of them dismissed by the police as cranks, detectives say they still don't know what happened to the boy.

The Patzes, who are from Massachusetts and have lived on Prince Street for eight years, have said they considered the neighborhood safe and that other children walked alone to the bus.

Since Etan's disappearance, however, they say they have restricted the movements of his sister, Shira, now 9, and have expressed concern about how the disappearance might affect his 3-year-old brother, Ari.

Last night, Mrs. Patz said she did not know about the sketch and seemed reluctant to attach much importance to it.

"There have been hundreds of people who saw something or thought they saw something," she said, "and none of them have led anywhere."

7th Birthday of Missing SoHo Boy Is Marked Sadly

By SELWYN RAAB

Today is Etan Patz's seventh birthday, but there will be no celebration in his family's loft apartment in SoHo.

Etan's parents, Stanley and Julie, will remain near a telephone in the hope of hearing the first news about their son since he was kidnapped almost five months ago on his way to school.

"We had a combination birthday and Halloween party for Etan last year," his father, Stanley, a 37-year-old photographer, reminisced sadly yesterday. "I have a picture of him with his face full of cake."

Etan's disappearance last May 25 has led to one of the longest and widest searches by the city's Police Department for a missing child.

"We can't figure it out, but we won't give up," said Detective Thomas J. Finan of the Missing Persons Bureau.

"We believe there is a good chance Etan is alive, that the person who took him will eventually make a mistake and that we will find him."

Etan, a first-grade pupil, was last seen on a Friday morning at about 8 A.M. walking from his home at 113 Prince Street, near Greene Street, to a school bus stop two blocks away on Broadway. It was the first time Etan's parents, who have two other young children, had permitted him to go alone to the bus stop in the downtown neighborhood of loft apartments, art galleries and small factories.

At the time the blond-haired boy, with blue eyes, was 3 feet 4 inches tall and weighed 50 pounds.

In the early stages of the investigation, there were hundreds of reports daily to the police about Etan's possible whereabouts. The police have interviewed more than 2,000 people, but

their fresh leads have diminished to a few a week, Detective Finan said.

The police and the family have distributed more than 300,000 "Missing Boy" posters with Etan's photograph in the metropolitan New York area. Many of the posters, although frayed, remain on walls and windows.

Mr. Patz said he and his wife, Julie, who is also 37, were convinced Etan is alive, but the birthday has brought more memories and new anxieties.

"It's hard to know what to do," said Mr. Patz. "Do we leave his toys and clothes untouched as a constant reminder of Etan or do we pack everything away to help us temporarily forget? We both get really depressed at times. We still think some misguided person who wanted to have a beautiful little boy took Etan.

"We keep praying that person will have pity on us and return our son."

STILL MISSING	
POLICE DEPARTMENT CITY OF NEW YORK	
	LOST CHILD ETAN PATZ
Missing Since Friday May 25th, 1978. Last seen 6 A.M. at Prince St & West 8 way.	